

# Bullying Prevention Guide for Parents

## 1. Talk to your child about bullying

- Make sure your children know what bullying looks and sounds like. If they know what bullying is, they will know what NOT to do and be able to recognize a bullying incident.
- Make sure you and your children know the school bullying policy and how to report an incident – whether it is your child being bullied or another student.

## 2. Take bullying seriously

- Listen to your kids when they talk about their days. Are they telling you about a bullying incident? Children may be embarrassed or afraid to acknowledge that they are being bullied.
- The more responsive parents and community members are, the easier it will be to stop bullying in our schools.
- Encourage your children to report incidents of bullying. Let them know that you will support them through the reporting process.

## 3. Report the incident to school personnel

- Share your child's concerns and specific information about bullying incidents with appropriate school personnel.
- Ask to see the school's policy on bullying.
- Work with school staff to protect your child from possible retaliation.
- Ask how the school plans to deal with the incident as well as their plans for preventing future bullying incidents.
- If you feel the problem hasn't been addressed, follow-up with the administration to make sure the report hasn't fallen by the wayside.

## 4. Take an active role in promoting respectful behaviors at school.

- Volunteer time to help supervise on field trips, on the playground, or in the lunchroom.
- Become an advocate for school-wide bullying prevention programs and policies.

### What NOT TO Do:

- Do not ignore your child's report.
- Do not advise your child to physically fight back. (Bullying lasts longer and becomes more severe when children fight back. Physical injuries often result.)
- Do not confront the child who bullies.
- Do not confront the family of the child who bullies.

*Adapted from stopbullying.gov <http://www.stopbullying.gov/parents/index.html>*

### What to do if your child is a bully or cyber-bully

It can be difficult for any parent to learn that their child is bullying others. The sooner you address the problem, the better chance you have of avoiding the long-term effects this behavior can have on a child. People who bully others:

- Are more likely to get into fights, vandalize property, and drop out of school.
- Have a higher risk of abusing alcohol and other drugs in adolescence and as adults.
- Are twice as likely as their peers to have criminal convictions as adults and four times more likely to be multiple offenders.
- Are more likely as adults to be abusive toward their romantic partners, spouses or children.

### Warning signs your child may be a bully

Your child:

- Frequently becomes violent with others
- Gets into physical or verbal fights with others
- Gets sent to the principal's office or detention a lot
- Has extra money or new belongings that cannot be explained
- Is quick to blame others
- Will not accept responsibility for his or her actions
- Has friends who bully others

### Tips for parents dealing with a bullying child

- **Educate your child about bullying.** Your child may have difficulty reading social signs or may not understand how hurtful their behavior can be. Foster empathy by encouraging your child to look at their actions from the victim's perspective. Remind your child that bullying can have legal consequences.
- **Remember you are a model for your children.** Kids learn from adults' aggressive or mean-spirited behavior as well as from acts of kindness and empathy.
- **Set limits with technology.** Let your child know you'll be monitoring his or her use of computers, email, and text messaging.
- **Establish consistent rules of behavior.** Make sure your child understands your rules and the consequences for breaking them.
- **Seek Support.** Talk to school personnel, mental health providers, PTA's or other parenting organizations in your community about how to address the issue. There are many good resources online. (See resources tab).

*Adapted from stopbullying.gov <http://www.stopbullying.gov/parents/index.html>*

*Helpguide.org <http://helpguide.org/mental/bullying.htm>*